

## HOMILY TRANSFIGURATION OT YRA 2017

How many of you have been to Glacier National Park in Montana? That is where I was on vacation. I was struck by the great beauty of what God created. One day, I was walking out of a gift shop at sunset. I was just a couple of blocks from a lake, with a beach, with the mountains in the background. The water was perfectly calm so you could see the mirrored reflection of the mountains in the water. The sky was a mixture of shades of red, pink orange and yellow. The water was a turquoise blue. I was awe struck by the beauty of the scene. At that moment I could hear God telling me: “This is what I created out of nothing, how about you?” And I just had this for a few minutes, and then it was gone. This was just a tiny glimpse of the universe that God created out of nothing. The next morning in prayer I thought: “We have created things as well. I have seen the immense cathedrals of Europe and the skylines of New York and Chicago and can appreciate these as well. But we did not create them out of nothing. God gave us all of the raw materials and the life and intellect to build them, but God is the cornerstone of everything we have been able to create, and nothing is quite as beautiful as what God created.

In the Gospel reading today we hear an account of the Transfiguration. God gave Peter, James and John just a glimpse of his divinity. And they recognized how good it was and Peter wanted to make three tents for Jesus, Abraham and Elijah so they could stay there. But just like my sunset, the Transfiguration lasted only a couple of minutes and it was gone. Sometimes we connect so much with the humanity of Jesus, an aspect of him that we can better understand, that we forget about his divinity. God, who created the whole universe out of nothing, who created each of us, and sustains everything, is so much bigger than we will ever be able to wrap our minds around. We need to trust him with our lives. At Glacier National Park they try to keep everything as close as they can to what God created, and they trust him to sustain it. When I was taking a tour they would point out the different forest fires. “This is from the fire of 2004. It was a terrible fire, but now we can see a view of the mountains that we

never would have been able to see before that. And we left everything the way it was. The pine cones dropped and the forest is re-propagating itself.” If only we could trust God like that with our lives. In the tragedies of our lives can we trust that God will bring something good, maybe a new view of life? And do we believe that God will bring new life if we cooperate with him?

God gives us these glimpses of his divinity to sustain us when life gets difficult. But we have to recognize them. Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain where he had their undivided attention. God revealed his divinity to me when I was away on vacation and did not have a million distractions. My faith enabled me to experience what I experienced. I am sure there were hundreds of people who saw the same scene and did not pay much attention to it or just thought it was pretty. After the transfiguration Jesus tells the disciples “do not tell the vision to anyone.” I think he told them that because he knew that people had to experience his divinity first hand themselves. At the sunset, one of my friends took a picture of the back of me standing there and the scene in the background. That is just a pretty picture. It did not capture the experience of the moment. We can hear about the Transfiguration and the other glimpses that Jesus gave the disciples during his public ministry, but it is not the same as experiencing his divinity ourselves. The more connected we are to God spiritually, in our relationship with him, the more likely we are to recognize the glimpse of his divinity when we see it. The more this will sustain us when a loved one dies, when a relationship ends, when we fail, when we lose a job.

These glimpses of the divinity of God are great experiences, but they are fleeting, just like my sunset. We cannot stay there, but we need to get on with the business of living. Remember these experiences when life gets difficult. Sometimes when life gets difficult, we are so distracted by the situation that we cannot see anything else. We need to trust in his divinity. Everything will be ok. God is in charge. We cannot get too caught up in the “what if’s” of the future. Most of them will never happen, and if they do, God will help us. God is in charge.